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President Marcos creates Task Force Pawikan



Editorial

To conserve the marine turtles and to develop turtle industries compassionately

In a matter of eleven days from the time the Forest Research Institute (FORI), an agency attached to the Ministry of Natural Resources, submitted its report on the marine turtles in the Philippines to President Ferdinand E. Marcos, the President signed Executive Order 542 creating the Task Force Pawikan. The submission was on 15 June; the President's signing was on 26 June 1979. Included in the report was a draft of a decree and a request of ₱2 million per year for six years that finally went into the Executive Order.

The President sees the vast economic potential of marine turtles, especially the green sea turtle or pawikan. The strategy he has adopted is to save the pawikan population from crippling depletion, increase its population along the principle of ecological balance and develop marine turtle-based industries in the domestic economy that eventually would earn foreign exchange.

Two-pronged is the thrust: conservation and development of marine turtle industries. The approach is compassionate.

This goes along well with the international scene as expounded by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources: conservation is no fringe movement. "The issues are inextricably bound up with human welfare and even survival. And inevitably they are political." □